

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00817 041226Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 SIL-01
LAB-04 /097 W
-----017365 041418Z /75

R 040900Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4513
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLINH
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, BU
SUBJECT: STRIKES IN BULGARIA

REF: SOFIA 801 (NOTAL)

1. BULGARIAN SOURCE REPORTS THAT TWO STRIKES OCCURRED
IN BULGARIA WEEK OF APRIL 17, JUST PRIOR TO NATIONAL
PARTY CONFERENCE (REFTEL). WORKERS AT AT LEAST ONE
FACTORY EACH IN PLEVEN (NORTHERN BULGARIA) AND STARA
ZAGORA (IN CENTER OF COUNTRY) REFUSED TO WORK FOR TWO
DAYS. DISPUTES ARE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN OVER WAGES,
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BUT ALSO TO HAVE HAD A POLITICAL ASPECT. SLOGANS ERE
PAINTED ON WALLS AT LEAST IN PLEVEN STATING, "WE DO
NOT WANT MORE TALK; WE WANT MEAT," IN REFERENCE TO
CONFERENCE AND TO PRESENT UNFAVORABLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
IN COUNTRY. SOURCZ SAID PARTY OFFICIALS HADHFOUND
STRIKES AND SLOGANS HIGHLY EMBARRASSING.

2. COMMENT: STRIKES ARE RARE IN BULGARIA AND INFORMATION ABOUT THEM IS HARD TO COME BY. TIMING AND TARGETTING OF THESE TWO SHOWED A SOPHISTICATION EMBASSY HAS NOT PRVIOUSLY REMARKED AMONG BULGARIAN WORKERS IN OUR MEMORY. THESE TWO STRIKES POINTED TO THE PARTY'S WEAKEST POINT -- UNDERPERFORMANCE OF THE ECONOMY -- AND, COMING JUST BEFORE THE PARTY CONFERENCE, PINNED THE TAIL DIRECTLY ON THOSE CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MALADY.

GARTHOFF

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NNN

Message Attributes

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